

PR
2944
L53

A
A
0
0
0
3
7
0
2
4
3
8

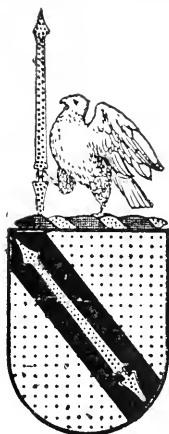


Leftwich

Bacon is not Shakespeare!



THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES



BACON
IS NOT
SHAKESPEARE!

BY

Ralph Winnington Leftwich,

A REPLY TO SIR EDWIN DURNING-LAWRENCE, Bt.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

—:O:—

London : Simpkin Marshall & Co.

Stratford-on-Avon : A. J. Stanley, Tudor House.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

Bacon

is not

Shakespeare !

by

Ralph Winnington Leftwich, M.D.

—:o:—

A reply to Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence. Bt.

—:o:—

London : SIMPKIN MARSHALL & Co

Stratford-on-Avon : A. J. STANLEY, Tudor House

PREFACE.

—:O:—

The theory that Bacon wrote the plays commonly attributed to Shakespeare began, not during the lifetime of those who would have detected an imposture, his contemporaries, but in 1848, and one of the originators died in a mad-house. The idea made but little progress and, amongst literary men, practically none.

Personally, I have never troubled to read the arguments; for ciphers do not appeal to me. I have heard of a Shakespearean cipher which proved that the plays were written by Bernard Shaw, and of another which fathered them upon Rudyard Kipling!

Sir Edward Durning-Lawrence's book "Bacon is Shakespeare!" appeared in 1910 and as far as I remember was not taken very seriously by the reviewers. But having recently come across it, and finding that the author boasts of having sent a copy of his misleading work to every public library in the world, I realise that something must be done. Many will read it in these institutions who know nothing of the arguments which refute it and their judgment may be warped for life. Failing stronger pens than mine, I hope this little work will do something to mitigate the mischief.

Since the publication of the book, Sir Edwin has sent to school teachers and others a copy of a pamphlet "The Shakespeare Myth." As this often gives only the conclusions and not the fallacious reasons upon which those conclusions are based, its effects may be serious. In a note accompanying it, he says "Now that it has been proved that William Shakespeare was unable to write so much as his own name, . . . people should no longer profess to believe that the "Immortal Plays" were written by the illiterate householder of Stratford, neither of whose daughters could read or write, and in whose house not a single book was found." Some of the criticism in the text is directed against statements made in the pamphlet, for Sir Edwin honoured me with a copy and I hope I have made good use of it.

My data are taken from many sources; but chiefly from Sir Sidney Lee's "Life of Shakespeare."

MAY 31ST, 1912.

R.W.L.

982600

PR
2944
L53

BACON IS NOT SHAKESPEARE !

BY

RALPH WINNINGTON LEFTWICH.

—————:O:—————

It has been said of Charles the First that the charm of his lineaments as portrayed in the canvases of Van Dyck, still wins adherents to his cause. Similarly the reader of the works of Shakespeare is conscious of a love and sympathy for the writer like that felt for a personal friend, and feels equal resentment when either is made the subject of attack. Ben Jonson must have been under this magnetic influence, for he said "I loved the man and do honour his memory (on this side idolatry) as much as any." Now within the last two years, thanks to the almost super-human efforts of Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence, the Baconian heresy has again raised its head. He asserts that his conclusions are absolutely incapable of refutation. Well, we shall see; but if this be so, my own work in originating the Shakespeare Commemoration Service and Memorial at Southwark Cathedral will be stultified.*

Bacon is a typical example—the finest to be found in our national biographies—of a dual personality. The Dr. Hyde and Mr. Jekyll of fiction are hardly finer. On the one hand, he was perhaps the wisest man of any age. Not even the wise men of Greece, not even Solomon himself, had his breadth of outlook or his grasp of the key of knowledge. On the other hand, he proved himself one of the meanest of mankind—but of this, later.

Now, according to our Baconian, this wisest of men contemplated writing a number of plays; and, thinking that their association with his name would be very dangerous, he determined to father them upon some one else; and although for a long time he was very poor and often in debt,† he was prepared to pay a suitable person very handsomely for co-operating with him.

* See Note A.

† See Note B.

Here let the reader endeavour to put himself in Bacon's place and think out the course of reasoning the philosopher would follow in selecting the right man. It would require the greatest of care, for if people became incredulous about the genuineness of the alleged authorship, questions would be asked, investigations made, and, if trouble arose with the Court, even a judicial inquiry might be held. The result of an unwise selection would mean the exposure of Bacon as the real author and his attempt at concealment would make matters worse, for he would be held to have written the plays with some sinister intent.

Now Bacon would say to himself, "I must have a writer with some literary reputation; for no absolutely unknown man can suddenly blossom forth as the author of these undoubtedly fine plays, without evoking some scrutiny of his claim to them. And, if suspicion arises, he may be required to write something of literary value in the presence of witnesses. Secondly, as his handwriting would be compared with that of the plays, he must either be able to imitate my writing or I must employ him personally as my amanuensis. He must therefore be handy with his pen in a mechanical sense. Thirdly, as many classical passages and allusions are interspersed through my plays and he may be questioned about them, he must be a fair classical scholar. Fourthly, he must be a man of strictly sober and somewhat unsociable habits, for "when the wine is in, the wit is out," and, in his unavoidable association with actors, he might otherwise blurt out the truth. Fifthly, as his presence will be essential at rehearsals, he must be a resident of London. Sixthly, since he might easily blackmail me, and there is no legal process by which I can bind him, he must be of unimpeachable honour; though, here, there is a difficulty, for he must be too honest to betray me, but not too honest to mind abetting deception.

Bacon would hesitate long and ponder much before making his choice. Finally, he selected, according to Sir Edwin, "a mean, drunken, ignorant, and unlettered rustic who never in his life wrote so much as his own name and in all probability was totally unable to read a single word of print"! A man whom "he banished to Stratford in 1594." What a course for the wisest man of his time to follow!

Our author claims in this work that Bacon was a great prophet; but he was a very poor one in this case, for not the smallest trouble with the authorities ever arose in connection with the plays. All that happened was that one scene of Richard the Second was omitted during Elizabeth's reign and this not because any action was taken against the

dramatist. It was the author of a book on Henry the Fourth who got into trouble for the way he wrote of Richard the Second's deposition. With his usual keen logical sense, Sir Edwin says that it was the play rather than the book that enraged Queen Elizabeth. If so, it was rather hard to send the author of the book to prison and to take no notice of the playwright. What possible danger would be incurred by writing most of the comedies it is difficult to see. A courtier's position was infinitely more dangerous.

But, as regards the other half of his personality, Bacon was "the meanest of mankind." The relentless opposition of his uncle to Bacon's otherwise just claims to preferment was due I believe, not as has hitherto been supposed, to Lord Burleigh's fear that his nephew might outstrip his son, but to his knowledge of the moral obliquity of Bacon's character—a point of which the shrewd Elizabeth no doubt was also fully cognisant. Otherwise, it is difficult to understand why a man of phenomenal ability, the son of a previous minister, and the nephew of an existing one should be passed over for years. And it must be remembered that Elizabeth was anything but wax in the hands of her advisers, and had Bacon been a man in whom full trust could be placed, she would have had her own way and promoted him. Instead of this his highest honour during her reign was that of Q.C. It was not that he did not humble himself enough to gain her favour. He did and beyond the limits of self respect; for when he said something in Parliament which offended his sovereign, he hastened to grovel before her and promised in future to keep a strict guard upon his tongue. Later, he spurred on the prosecution to drive to the block his ever staunch friend and benefactor, Essex; and, not content with that, he blackened his memory after death. He held secret interviews with parties to actions in his court, received bribes from suitors without even showing enough "honour among thieves" to give his judgment in their favour, and abetted others in putting a poor and probably innocent clergyman upon the rack, although torture had then practically dropped into disuse.

Now the strong point among Baconians is the interpretation given by them to certain cryptic letters, numbers, and emblems; which, with or without a cipher, give certain words or dates and afford information as to the authorship of the plays.

But, instead of endeavouring to controvert this evidence I am prepared to assume for the sake of argument that all such references in the plays or elsewhere are strictly true.

I will admit that Bacon inspired "contemporary" title pages which were first published many years after his death. I will allow that capital letters may have a hidden meaning in a play, but none in the lines to the Droeshout engraving. I will not contradict the statement that Bacon edited, and must have the credit for the style of, The Authorised Version of the Bible. Nor will I gainsay the inference that Bacon was one of the greatest of prophets in that, while Daniel was content to indicate a date vaguely by a "time and times and the dividing of time," Bacon foretold the exact year of the appearance of that great work of Sir Edwin which has finally exploded the "Shakespeare Myth"! Nay, I will go farther and generously place at Sir Edwin's disposal a Baconian argument from the plays which seems to have escaped his notice. His namesake Friar Lawrence is described as a "Franciscan"!

I have no uneasiness in taking this course, for what after all do these cryptic references prove?

In the most tragic scene in all history, the Roman Governor is asked to write down the Culprit not as King of the Jews, but as having *said* that he was King. And all this part of Baconian evidence only proves that Bacon has *said* that he was the author of the plays of Shakespeare. We are not bound to believe him. Now I contend that if cryptic allusions to Bacon's authorship really are incorporated in the plays and elsewhere, it is quite consistent with the philosopher's moral character to suggest that, seeing evidence of such commanding genius in the works, he fraudulently or perhaps perversely determined to associate his name with them. This, he may have done by bribing compositors to insert certain words and engravers certain emblems. But, since Durning-Lawrence implies that Bacon passed the first folio through the press, and destroyed all proofs of Shakespeare's connection with the plays, have we to thank him that not a word of the manuscript remains?

No, I will not charge Bacon with such a terrible offence; for, although many writers seem to think this disappearance most extraordinary, there is nothing at all wonderful about it. The same is true of the works of the other Elisabethan dramatists—Peele, Green, Marlow, Beaumont, Fletcher, Webster, Marston and Ford; not one of whose plays remains in manuscript. All that we have is one play of Massinger, one play of Heywood, and one masque of Ben Jonson! The loss of Ben Jonson's MSS. is far more surprising, for he was very careful with his works and published a collected edition of his plays himself.

The writer of "Bacon is Shakespeare" bases his opinion

of absolute illiteracy largely upon his disbelief in the authenticity of the signatures, and this notwithstanding that the will is attested by four witnesses, and that the word "seal" has been erased and "hand" substituted. Well, the evidence of experts in handwriting does not carry much weight even in our day, and when it comes to the crabbed writing of Elizabeth's time, the number of those who can even decipher it is limited and none is so expert that he can prove beyond question the genuineness or the reverse of a signature. Even if it could be proved that another's hand wrote one of the signatures, this might only mean that the seal was the more important. The absence of the genuine signature would therefore not prove inability to write.

But we need not worry ourselves over the question as to whether Shakespeare could write. For we have absolute contemporary proof that he could not only write, but write well and, considering that Sir Edwin quotes from the same work, it is surprising that he does not refer to the passage. Ben Jonson says in his "Discoveries" "I remember the players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare that in his writing (whatsoever he penned) he never blotted out a line." Hemyng and Condell make a similar statement.

Sir Edwin "proves" so many remarkable things that it is not surprising to find him proving that Shakespeare was unable to write when three days old! And I am not disposed to dispute the point. The explanation of the assertion is this. He says that Judith Shakespeare could not write because, against her name in the marriage register, there is a cross. Now the writing on that page is all in one hand—probably that of the vicar. There are the names of some twenty couples, but not a single signature against even one of them, and only one cross—that against Judith's name. The fact is that when such great interest began to be taken in Shakespeare—a hundred years or more after his death, a cross was placed against the name of each member of his family so that the eye could alight upon the entry without the trouble of reading through the other names. Against the poet's own name, in the baptismal register, three crosses were placed! He was therefore trebly illiterate.

Another "proof of illiteracy" is the statement that "no books were found in the house," because forsooth they are not specially mentioned in the will! If these are fair examples of the care taken by Sir Edwin in collecting evidence, his other statements become suspect. Shakespeare's brother Gilbert could write well as shown by his signature in the Birthplace, yet being two years younger he must have received his education when Jolin Shakespeare was poorer. Further, as

shown by the Stratford archives, his father could write with facility.

Of course, much is made of the usual argument that Shakespeare's upbringing and career make it impossible that he could have acquired the knowledge of the classics, of court life, of the law, and of foreign countries, that is so evident in the plays. Now at Stratford there was a Grammar School; and grammar in Shakespeare's time meant the Latin grammar. The headmaster of this school received a larger stipend than that paid to the headmaster of Eton and even the usher was required to be a graduate of Oxford. Further there is shown at the birthplace a long letter written in Latin in 1598, by a connection of the poet, a pupil aged eleven. If, therefore, Shakespeare was educated at this school he must have been taught the classics. It would be very surprising if he did not go there, for the school was free and his father had been chief alderman of Stratford. The presumption is that he did receive his education there and the burden of proving that he did not lies with the other side. Ben Jonson, admitted his classical knowledge though he says that Shakespeare had small Latin and less Greek, but this was only by comparison with his own very extensive knowledge. The relatively few instances of deep classical knowledge given by Churton Collins may very well have been prompted by Ben Jonson. Genius can do much with scanty materials. Few poems have a more purely Greek atmosphere than *Endymion*; yet Keats had never learnt Greek. He derived his knowledge from *Lemprière*. As regards Law, Shakespeare brought several actions and had much to do with leases. In this way he would acquire a good deal of legal knowledge and the law terms in one of his plays are said to have been taken bodily out of one of his leases. With court life, he had also a good deal to do; for his plays had many what are now called "command performances" before both Elizabeth and James, and as a practical actor his powers of mimicry would help him to acquire such knowledge more rapidly than another. But all adverse criticism of this nature leaves out the consideration that he was a great genius and genius has a royal road to knowledge. Still genius has its limitations. It cannot acquire *technical* knowledge without actual contact and experience, and to my mind it is far easier to account for a knowledge of the law in Shakespeare than for a knowledge of practical stagecraft in Bacon. An acquaintance with "masques" is not sufficient. There is, too, plenty of low life in the plays and Bacon's knowledge of this would be small. It must be remembered further that several years of Shakespeare's life are unaccounted for, and during this period

there are many ways in which he might have acquired special knowledge. It is quite likely that he went abroad. But it is not essential to prove that Shakespeare had been on the Continent. Anne of Geierstein for instance has excellent local colour and was much appreciated by the Swiss; but when it was written, Scott had not been to Switzerland.

The fact that Shakespeare often criticised the craze for foreign travel is cited as evidence that he had never been abroad. To my mind it points to the opposite conclusion. When a person gives an opinion about travelling it is always assumed that he is speaking from experience, and without this experience Shakespeare would probably have expressed no views upon the question. His belittling of it only shows that he had been abroad and did not like it—and it is likely enough that he did not travel in luxury. It has been thought that Shakespeare could not have belonged to one of the many companies that travelled abroad because it was "actors of small account at home who mainly took part in them." But Shakespeare, like other people, had in technical matters to crawl before he could run and at an early period of his life was not skilled enough to gain admission to a London company. Even at the present day, the budding actor begins by joining a touring company.

This is what, I suggest, happened. Shakespeare stole or killed deer at Fulbroke Park. It could not have been at Charlecote partly because there were no deer there at that time, partly—and I think this point is new—because Sir Thomas Lucy could not act as both prosecutor and judge, and it is as a judge that Shakespeare lampooned him. Stratford having become too hot for him, he ran away; but London would offer no secure retreat; for did not the Queen's writ run there? Therefore, hearing of a company of actors being bound for the Continent and having a bent for the theatre, he decided that there lay his salvation and joined them. But why, it will be asked, is it that Shakespeare's name does not occur on any of the lists of Englishmen playing abroad? Simply because, being under the ban of the law, he would naturally enter under a false name.

English companies are known to have played at Elsinore. He probably belonged to one. The manager of a company going to Italy would say "We cannot find time or money enough to go right through the country, so we will take a few cities that lie close to each other in the part nearest home." Now except in the classical plays it is towns in this part of Italy,—Venice, Verona, Milan, Padua, and Mantua, which form the scene of his Italian plays. Later,

his experience as an actor commended him to the notice of the London managers. This view, being based upon rational grounds and sound analogies deserves more notice than mere conjecture, and should suffice to satisfy those who insist that the writer of the plays must have visited Italy.

Comparing some of the plays as they were first printed with the form they took in the folio edition, it is true that many additions and corrections appear. This is easily accounted for. Each play was bought outright by the manager of the theatre and as there was no effective copyright law, publication was carefully guarded against. Of the five plays in which the greatest alterations occur, *The Merry Wives* and *Henry the Fifth* were pirated by Thomas Crede whose agent no doubt took down, with many inaccuracies, the words as spoken in the play; while the first publication of *King John*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *Henry the Sixth* (second part) were old plays by other writers or at the most revised by Shakespeare. Even the titles were different. These were respectively "*The Troublesome Reign of King John*," "*The Taming of a Shrew*," and "*The Contentiou between York and Lancaster*."

The one play which, if Bacon were its author one would expect to find re-modelled in the folio is that in which the cipher word *Honorificabilitudinitatibus* occurs, "*Love's Labour's Lost*," but that is practically unaltered. The long word is not peculiar to it, for it dates from the twelfth century and occurs in *Daute*. Since so much has been made of it by Baconians, the reader will naturally ask where it occurs in the acknowledged writings of Bacon. The answer is "*Nowhere!*" It is not even in *Promus*, the collection of words and phrases which he left in MS.

Next, passages are given from "*The Great Assises holden in Parnassus*." But here it is difficult to follow Sir Edwin's reasoning. On the ground that Bacon in this mock trial occupies the position of Chancellor of Parnassus, it is held proved that he was considered the greatest of poets. But he was far from being the greatest, if judged by his own acknowledged poems, and it could not have been by reason of his authorship of the plays for that was still a secret. Sir Edwin cannot have it both ways. But there is no mystery about it. He was Chancellor of Parnassus because, he was both man of letters and chancellor.

The composition of the court is given in fac-simile. In the first column are the names of the jurymen and in the second column, divided from the first by a vertical line, is a list of the malefactors. Now Sir Edwin advances the extraordinary proposition that the jurors were identical with the malefactors! Shakespeare comes about seventh on the

first column as a juror while the malefactor on the same level in the second column is "The writer of weekly accounts." Therefore says our Baconian, Shakespeare was not a poet, he was only a book-keeper! Even this is surely an odd occupation for a man who could not write! By the same reasoning, Massinger, who had nothing whatever to do with Scotland, would be "The Scottish Dove"! Shakespeare's real status however is made abundantly clear by the cryer, who calls out "Sylvester, Sandes, Drayton, Beaumont, Fletcher, Massinger, Shakespeare and Heywood, Poets Good and True"! Later, says Sir Edwin, this description is contradicted because the defendant says:—"Shakespeare's a mimic (that is a mere actor not a poet)." But surely a man may be both mimic and poet.

The next extract is from "The Return from Parnassus" a play acted by Cambridge students in 1601, and containing words complaining of the actors of the time that "With mouthing words that better wits have framed, They purchase lands and now esquires are made." The view held up to now has been that the lines refer to Alleyn, who writing nothing himself, purchased the manor of Dulwich. They cannot refer to Shakespeare because he was known much better as a writer than as an actor, and in the same play our poet is spoken of as "sweet master Shakespeare." Our author does not quote this; he has indeed a very convenient way of not mentioning points that clash with his theory. Further, it was not he, but his father who applied for the grant of arms. The player in Ratse's Ghost and even Sogliardo, may possibly be meant for Shakespeare whose prosperity naturally excited the envy of his fellow writers, and, temporarily, even of quarrelsome Ben. The balance of opinion is overwhelmingly in favour of Shakespeare's good nature. His debtors were very likely quite undeserving of sympathy.

Bacon's *Promus*, which was first printed by the erudite and industrious Mrs. H. Pott, is a kind of *Commonplace Book* containing an immense number of phrases, sentences and quotations. Many of these occur in Shakespeare's plays and the question is:—Did Bacon get some of them from Shakespeare? Bacon made but small use of them in his writings and I suggest that he intended them not for his books but for use in his speeches; and, indeed, many of them are too colloquial and trivial for printing. Spedding says that much of *Promus* must have been written down from memory, as it contains so many inaccuracies. Memory of what? Not often of a book, for that would be there to refer to, and the extracts from books would mostly have been made while reading them. But it may well have been memory of a play or a speech.

Our author quotes a number of writers to prove that Bacon had a high reputation as a poet amongst his contemporaries. Well, the opinions of critics are no more infallible in the case of Bacon than they were in that of Keats, and posterity has not endorsed either view. A poet in the etymological sense of *creator* he certainly was, and an epoch-making one.

Bacon is said to have written a sonnet, but it has been lost. The only poems we have from his hand are the translations of a few of the Psalms; but not much poetical skill is required here because the imagery is already provided

The following specimen is from the 149th Psalm:—

“ Let not your voice alone His praise forth tell,
But move withal and praise Him in the dance.
Cymbals and harps let them be tuned up well;
’Tis He that doth the poor’s estate advance.
Do not this only on the solemn days,
But on your secret beds your spirits raise! ”

The reader can judge for himself whether the author of such poetry as this could have written the plays.

Sir Edwin quotes some opinions adverse to Shakespeare’s authorship of the plays and includes those of Palmerston, Bismarck, and Mark Twain amongst them; but hardly one of them gives a downright denial of its possibility; and, except the *father* of an editor of Shakespeare’s plays, not one pronounces for Bacon. It would be easy to give names far more eminent where the contrary view has been held; except that the whole of this brochure would be required for their insertion. To my mind, one thing that definitely excludes Bacon, is the fact that the characters in the plays are living men and women—as much alive indeed as any of our own personal friends—and Bacon’s other works show no trace of his possession of this rare power.

Shakespeare’s use of such odd local surnames as Bardolph and Fluellen as well as Sly, Page, and Broome, and of places near Stratford, such as Barton-on-the-Heath, Wincott and Woncott cannot be reconciled with Baconian authorship partly because Bacon could never have heard of them, and partly because, even if he had, he would have scrupulously avoided mentioning them. Christopher Sly says he has run up a score with Marian Hacket the fat ale-wife of Wincot. The parish of Quinton includes Wincot, and in 1591 a child named Hacket was baptised in Quinton Church! But the most remarkable is the case of Woodmancote. This village is still pronounced locally, Woncot. Now in Henry the Fourth, Second Part, the names of William Visor of Woncot,

and Clement Perkes of the Hill appear, and in the sixteenth century, there were living a Visor of Woucot and a Perkes of Stinchcombe Hill, which latter adjoins Woucot!

If Shakespeare was not thought much of at Stratford it would not be surprising. A prophet has no honour in his own country. The author quotes a passage from a French writer (1645) that Stratford owes all its glory to an Archbishop of Canterbury and Sir Hugh Clopton—no mention of Shakespeare. This mode of arguing is characteristic of our author. He lays great stress upon Dugdale's sketch of the bust; but ignores his evidence when it tells against his theory. Now Dugdale says "One thing more in reference to this ancient town (Stratford) is observable, that it gave birth to our late famous poet, Will Shakespeare."

In discussing the cause of the poet's death, the author naturally makes much of the tradition that he died of a fever, following a drunken carouse in the respectable company of Ben Jonson and Michael Drayton. But bad water would engender fever, and wine would not, and the inference is that he drank more *water* than his friends! Because Shakespeare was a good companion and would not deign to "pose," far too much stress has been laid upon his convivial and sociable habits.

The question of the Droeshout portrait touches me personally because, although the presentment of the poet in the Shakespeare-Spenser Window at Southwark is taken from the Chandos portrait, I used my influence, ably seconded by that great authority Mr. M. H. Spielmann, to have the figure based upon the portrait engraved by Martin Droeshout for the first folio. This Martin was only the engraver, and I prefer the view that has been advanced that it was his uncle of the same name who drew the original picture. He was described as a painter of Brabant, but was married in London in 1602. And I suggest that it was unfortunately by his influence that so young and inefficient an engraver was employed. It is not likely that the publishers and editors of the first folio would entrust the work entirely to a man who, being only 15 when the poet died, had at most a fading memory of his subject.

If, as Sir Edwin says, the engraving is meant for a stuffed dummy, I had better have advocated the Chandos which represents at least a real man. Bad engraving has much spoilt the picture as given in the folio, and it could never have been great as a work of art; but there are better impressions—notably one that has unfortunately for us gone to America. The best we have is in the Bodleian Library. This to my eye, is full of charm. There is humour and a sug-

gestion of large tolerance in the curve of the lips; there is the lambent fire of genius in the eyes, and, in the domed forehead and the lateral broadening out of the head above the temples, there is evidence of great mental capacity. But many who have no sympathy with the Baconians seem unable to find in the Droeshout portrait any indication of genius. This however does not prove that the original was a fool, for Robert Bruce and General Wolfe both looked idiotic. The profile in each case can be represented by a caret placed horizontally. Bruce's head is almost exactly like that of the pre-historic Neanderthal man; and Wolfe looked so idiotic that somebody told George the Third that he was mad! "Mad?" said the King "Well I wish he would bite some of my other generals!"

The wrinkle behind the jaw, which is due to a fold of fat, is claimed by the author to indicate that the face is covered by a mask! As if Ben Jonson would have agreed to write the well known adulatory lines to the portrait knowing all the time that it was a "dummy!"

But Sir Edwin's strong point is the coat. And it must be admitted that it appears to be made up of a left front and a left back, and anything left-handed he insists appertains to Bacon and is certainly a not unsuitable emblem of the baser half of his personality. But the explanation is easy. The back of the coat was no doubt made up of two right halves, and the effect of the whole would be what one might term "parti-patterned." The design in fact was a modification and survival of the well-known parti-coloured costume. Curiously enough the portrait of the Earl of Essex, now at Earl's Court, has a similar design as also has Ben Jonson's coat in Westminster Abbey.

The bust is objected to because the face is unlike that shown by Dugdale (1656); but the point is weakened because that shown by Rowe (1709) resembles neither! In both, the cushion looks rather sack-like and Sir Edwin insists that it is really a sack. But in this he is mistaken; for it shows a tassel or at least a knot at each of the four corners, and a sack would not have more than two. There is no pen; but this means nothing, since it is on record that an Oxford student once broke the pen and the same thing may have happened before. Now not much importance need be attached to these and other differences for in 1748, Mr. John Ward devoted the profits of a representation of Othello to the repairing of the bust because the soft stone was much decayed in parts. It would hardly be possible to patch the stone and retain the exact likeness, and it would not be easy to make a good job of it in any case so that it is quite likely

that the present face, apart from the fact that it has been painted several times, differs from the original one. But the architectural details also differ from that shown by Dugdale. The fact is that both Dugdale and Rowe each made a rough sketch with marginal notes and drew the finished picture afterwards. This will account for the legs of the cherubs resting on the cornice in one case and dangling from it in the other.

In 1621 Bacon, after attaining an earldom and the highest position in the Law, was disgraced. He survived his fall five years and having no promotion to hope for, and Shakespeare being dead, why did he not then proclaim his authorship of the plays? Such a course might even have helped him with a king who had shown his appreciation of them. For a very good reason. *Ben Jonson was alive* and in his bluff way would have laughed him to scorn and challenged him to sit down and write another!

The object of this paper is to disprove Bacon's authorship of the plays; but incidentally a good deal of evidence of Shakespeare's authorship has been included. I will here add that over forty existing documents mention his name and that there are no less than a hundred-and-fifty contemporary allusions to him. I will quote a few. Ben Jonson's opinion is absolutely impartial for he was a friend and admirer of both men. One quotation from him has already been given. In addition he says "He was indeed honest and of an open and free nature, had an excellent phantasy and gentle expressions" Hardly the man to conspire with Bacon or to lend himself to a humiliating deception! Again, "Thou art alive while still thy book doth live" and "Shine forth thou star of poets" and "Which crowned him Poet first, then Poet's King." Surely a fellow-actor would soon discover the deception if Shakespeare had not written the plays! This is the testimony of the leading member of his company, Richard Burbage:—

"And Shakespeare, thou whose honey-flowing vein
Pleasing the world, thy praises doth obtain."

Heywood says "Mellifluous Shakespeare whose enchanting quill" Leonard Digges "Be sure our Shakespeare, thou canst never die, but crowned with laurel live eternally." Hemyng and Condell in the preface to the first folio give an estimate of his personal qualities, and say that one object they had in publishing the work was "To keep the memorie of so worthy a friend and fellow alive as was our Shakespeare." (Why did Bacon permit this testimony to appear)? Francis Meres says "As the soul of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras, so the sweet wittie soule

of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honeytongued Shakespeare."

Of those whose lives overlapped that of the poet, Milton in "An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatic Poet, W. Shakespeare" (1632), referring to the monument he had raised to himself by his works, says "kings for such a tomb would wish to die." Fuller (1608-1661), says "Many were the wit combats between him and Ben Jonson, which two, I behold, like a great Spanish galleon and an English man-of-war. Master Jonson was built far higher in learning, solid but slow; Shakespeare, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides and take advantage of all winds by the quickness of his wit and invention."

Is it possible that these men could have failed to detect the imposture had Shakespeare not written the plays?

No; these extracts alone should have prevented Sir Edwin from coming to his absurd conclusions. All that he has proved is that Bacon may have *said* or implied that he was the author of Shakespeare's Plays.

I venture then to claim that I have undermined all this boasted evidence, and not till it is proved that Michel Angelo was the real architect of Henry the Seventh's Chapel, Constable the real painter of Turner's pictures, and Tate and Brady the authors of Shelley's Ode to the Skylark, will I believe that Bacon wrote Shakespeare.

"Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus."



APPENDIX.

NOTE (A). — This beautiful memorial, by Mr. H. McCarthy, will, thanks largely to the liberality of Mr. J. Sanford Saltus, be in position by the autumn.

Professor Wallace, to whose labours all Shakespeareans are deeply indebted, affirms that the poet lived for many years with a family named Mountjoy, in Silver Street, Cripplegate; but the supposition is based almost entirely upon the statement of a servant that Shakespeare then "lay in the house;" but because he lay in the house it does not follow that he was more than an occasional lodger. The case was one of alleged unpaid dower and as the action was brought eight years after the marriage, it must have involved prolonged talk and bickering. Shakespeare was therefore unlikely to forget the essential details if he had lived long with the family. But the contrary is the case. He remembered neither the amount of the marriage portion nor when it was to be paid and he says he did not know what household "stuffe" the daughter received on her marriage. The professor has heard no doubt *ad nauseam* about his mistake in suggesting that the French herald Montjoie St. Denis was named by Shakespeare after the Mountjoy family, but a further error is his inference that the Shakespeare who left Bishopsgate in 1596 could not have been the poet because the pipe roll is headed *Sussex*. The roll refers to an unpaid contribution to a subsidy and on the margin in MS. is *Episcopo Wintonensi*. This is to inform the sheriff that his writ would not run because Shakespeare was living in the Bishops's Liberty of the Clink and the point about the county is the fact that at that time, there was only one sheriff for Sussex and Surrey. The pipe roll was only brought to light in 1904, but it confirms in a striking manner the memorandum left by Alleyne that Shakespeare lodged in 1596 near the Bear Garden in Southwark.

NOTE (B). — Our author says that in 1597 Bacon bribed Shakespeare with a gift of £1000. Now in 1597 Bacon was hard pressed by a goldsmith named Sympson for the return of a loan and in 1598 the usurer had him arrested and thrown into a spunging house for a debt of £300.

AN APPEAL AND A SUGGESTION.

I venture to take this opportunity to make an appeal to the "powers that be" to wipe out the slur that their predecessors have so long put upon the reputation of the nation for common sense and transfer Shakespeare's will or at least one sheet of it from the uncongenial cellar where it now lies to the Birthplace, where, neither fire nor artificial light is permitted. Thousands of scholars and sympathisers come every year to Stratford and their time is generally limited. At Stratford they hope to see everything relating to the poet and not even his signature is there!

Further I should like to point out to the Trustees of the Birthplace that the cellar, which is the only absolutely untouched part of the house, might be shown without risk if a light were placed so as to shine through a window of vertical prismatic glass, the rays being deflected right and left. An acetylene motor lamp would do admirably and could be placed at a safe distance.

** * Those who possess Sir Edwin's book should insert this pamphlet at the end of it.*

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

Los Angeles

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

II
JUN

JUN 14 1971

JUN 14 1971

URI

1984

Form L9-50m-4,'61 (B8994s4) 444

THE LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

PR

2944

Leftwich -

L53

Bacon is not
Shakespeare!



3 1158 00907 0771

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA 000 370 243 8

